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(54) **X-ray computerized tomographic imaging method and imaging system capable of forming scanogram data from helically scanned data**

Verfahren und Vorrichtung zur Erzeugung von Röntgencomputertomogrammen und zum Erzeugen von Schattenbildern mittels spiralförmiger Abtastung

Procédé d'imagerie pour tomographie X numérique et dispositif permettant d'obtenir un scanogramme à partir des données obtenues en mode hélicoïdal

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• PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 14, no. 484
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Description

The present invention generally relates to an X-ray CT (computerized tomographic) imaging method and an X-ray CT imaging system. More specifically, the present invention is directed to an X-ray CT imaging method and an imaging system capable of producing scan data from X-ray projection image data of a biological body acquired by helically scanning this biological body.

Generally speaking, to image a biological body under medical examination by utilizing a conventional X-ray CT system, a scan image (scanogram) of this biological body is first obtained by projecting X-ray beams to the overall portion of the biological body, while maintaining the X-ray source and detector at a fixed position. Based upon the scan image, positioning operation of tomographic images is carried out to determine a desired diagnostic portion of the biological body. Thereafter, while the X-ray source is rotated together with the X-ray detector around the diagnostic portion, this diagnostic portion of the biological body is scanned by way of the X-ray pulses to acquire X-ray projection image data, and then, the X-ray projection image data are processed to finally obtain X-ray CT image data. When such a scanogram is produced, while a couch on which the biological body is mounted is translated along a longitudinal direction of this biological body, the normal X-ray projection is performed without rotating the X-ray source around the biological body (namely, with fixed X-ray source). Accordingly, the X-ray projection data are obtained and processed to form a scanogram 30 as represented in Fig. 1.

Subsequently, in the conventional X-ray CT imaging system, positioning of the CT images is performed with respect to this scanogram 30 at dotted positions L₁, L₂, ... L_n ("n" being an integer) as shown in Fig. 1. Then, the couch on which the biological body under medical examination is positioned, is once returned to the home position, and thereafter, is again translated to position the first CT imaging position "L₁" just under the X-ray source (not shown) and the X-ray detector (not shown either), which are rotated during the X-ray scanning operation. As a result, a series of X-ray projection data are acquired after the CT imaging operation at the final CT imaging position "L_n" is accomplished.

As previously described, the conventional X-ray CT imaging system necessarily requires a lengthy examination time duration until the desirable CT images are obtained, since first the biological body is translated so as to obtain the scanogram 30, secondly this biological body is returned to the home position, and thirdly the biological body is again translated in order to obtain the X-ray CT image data. In other words, the biological body under medical examination such as a patient must endure such a lengthy and afflictive medical examination. Moreover, there are some risks that the relative position between the X-ray source and the patient dif-

fers from each other during the scanogram data acquisition and the CT image data acquisition. Even if, for instance, the first CT imaging position "L₁" is accurately determined on the scanogram 30, an actual CT imaging position on the patient may be positionally shifted.

EP-A-0 383 232 discloses a X-ray CT imaging method and system in accordance with the preamble of the independent claims. There, a patient is helically scanned and projection image data are interpolated in order to reconstruct an image of a desired slice.

DE-C-41 03 588 published on May 27, 1992, discloses a computer tomograph in which a patient is helically scanned. In order to derive an additional shadow image, image data of a predetermined projection angle are processed.

The present invention has been made in an attempt to solve the above-described problems of the conventional X-ray CT imaging system, and therefore, has an object to provide such X-ray CT imaging method/system capable of producing a scanogram within a short examination time.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an X-ray CT imaging method/system capable of obtaining a scanogram at high positional precision with respect to CT images of a biological body under medical examination.

To achieve the above-described objects, an X-ray CT (computerized tomographic) imaging method, according to the present invention, comprises the steps as defined in any of claims 1 to 6.

portion of the biological body (20); and

reconstructing an X-ray CT image (21) of said helically-scanned biological body (20) based upon said first X-ray projection image data, whereby both of said scanogram (22) and said X-ray CT image (21) are substantially simultaneously displayed.

In addition, according to the present invention, an X-ray CT (computerized tomographic) imaging system (100:400) comprises the features as defined in any of claims 7 to 12.

For a better understanding of the present invention, reference is made of the following specification in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 schematically illustrates a scanogram 30 produced in a conventional X-ray CT imaging method; Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram for showing an arrangement of an X-ray CT imaging system 100 according to a first preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 3 schematically illustrates the helical scanning operation and the X-ray projection positions to obtain a scanogram by the first X-ray CT imaging system 100;

Fig. 4 is a flow chart for explaining the scan data/CT image reconstruction process operation performed by the first X-ray CT imaging system 100;

Fig. 5 schematically illustrates a sinogram 25 of the first X-ray CT imaging system 100;

Fig. 6 is a display screen for displaying both a scanogram 22 and a CT image 21 in the first X-ray CT imaging system 100;

Fig. 7 is a schematic block diagram for representing an arrangement of an X-ray CT imaging system 200 according to a second preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8 illustrates how to obtain a top-viewed scanogram and a side-viewed scanogram in the second X-ray CT imaging system 200;

Fig. 9 is a flow chart for explaining the scan data/CT image reconstruction process operation executed by the second X-ray CT imaging system 200;

Fig. 10 schematically represents the multiple image display realized in the second X-ray CT imaging system 200;

Fig. 11 is a schematic block diagram for representing an arrangement of an X-ray CT imaging system 300 according to a third preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 12A to 12C show operation timing charts of the third X-ray CT imaging system 300;

Fig. 13 is a flow chart for explaining the entire process operation of the third X-ray CT imaging system 300;

Fig. 14 schematically represents the partial X-ray projection mode and the circumferential X-ray projection mode effected in the third X-ray CT imaging system 300;

Fig. 15 is a schematic block diagram for representing an arrangement of an X-ray CT imaging system 400 according to a fourth preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 16A is a flow chart for explaining the high-speed process operation by the fourth X-ray CT imaging system 400, and Fig. 16B is a flow chart for explaining the low-speed process operation by the fourth X-ray CT imaging system 400.

ARRANGEMENT OF FIRST X-RAY CT IMAGING SYSTEM

In Fig. 2, there is shown an arrangement of an X-ray CT (computerized tomographic) imaging system 100 according to a first preferred embodiment of the present invention.

The first X-ray CT imaging system 100 is mainly constructed of an X-ray scanner 2 for performing X-ray scanning operation with respect to a biological body under medical examination such as a patient 20 (shown in Fig. 3) to produce X-ray projection data; a data processing unit 3 for processing the X-ray projection data; a display unit 4 for displaying both of a scanogram and an X-ray CT image; and a main controller 50. The data processing unit 3 includes a preprocessing unit 5

for preprocessing the X-ray projection data derived from the X-ray scanner 2 to obtain preprocessed X-ray projection data; a scan data processing unit 6 for processing the preprocessed X-ray projection data to produce scan data; an image reconstructing unit 7 for reconstructing a desirable X-ray CT image from the preprocessed X-ray projection data; and a synthesizing unit 8 for synthesizing the above-described scan data and X-ray CT image data in such a manner that both of the scanogram and the CT image of the biological body are displayed on the same screen of the display unit 4 (will be discussed more in detail).

OPERATION OF FIRST X-RAY CT IMAGING SYSTEM

It should be understood that according to the present invention, the patient 20 is helically scanned only one time by the X-ray scanner 2 of the first X-ray CT imaging system 100 so as to obtain both of scan data and CT image data. That is to say, since the X-ray projection data are acquired during only one helical scanning operation and thereafter both of the scan data and the CT image data are produced from this series of X-ray projection data, the couch (not shown in detail) on which the patient 20 is laid is translated only one time along a longitudinal direction thereof.

As represented in Fig. 3, the helical scanning operation is performed by the X-ray scanner 2 with respect to the patient 20 in the first X-ray CT imaging system 100 of Fig. 2. For the sake of simplicity, although an X-ray detector unit 12 is positioned opposite to an X-ray tube 10, this detector unit 12 is omitted from Fig. 3. The X-ray helical scanning operation *per se* is known from, for instance, U.S. patent No. 4,630,202 issued to Mori, entitled "COMPUTERIZED TOMOGRAPHIC APPARATUS UTILIZING A RADIATION SOURCE", patented on December 16, 1986. Roughly speaking, while the X-ray tube 10 employed in the X-ray scanner 2 is rotated around the patient 20, the patient 20 (couch) is translated along a longitudinal direction of the patient 20, so that the relative trail of the X-ray tube 10 with respect to the patient 20 represents a helical shape (see Fig. 3). Predetermined (same phase) positions are indicated by reference numerals 10A, 10B, ... 10N, which imply, for instance, $0^\circ, 360^\circ, \dots 360^\circ \times N$ ("N" being an integer).

Referring now to the arrangement of the first X-ray CT imaging system 100 shown in Fig. 2 and an operation flow of this imaging system 100 shown in Fig. 4, acquisition of the scan data about the patient 20 from the helically-scanned X-ray projection data will be described.

As shown in a lefthand portion of this operation flow in Fig. 4, a series of X-ray projection data obtained by helically scanning the patient 20 is continuously acquired from the X-ray scanner 2 under control of the main controller 50.

In a flow chart indicated in a righthand portion of Fig. 4, only the helically-scanned projection data

acquired at a preselected projection angle, for instance, 0° or 360° (corresponding to the positions 10A, 10B, ... 10N) are read out from the above-described series of helically-scanned X-ray projection data at a first step ST-10. At the next step ST-12, the read projection data acquired at the specific projection angle of 0° (360°) are processed by a curved plane/flat plane transformation, since the X-ray detector unit 12 (see Fig. 2) is constructed of a plurality of detector channels having curved surfaces. Then, the plane-transformed projection data are further processed in a high-pass filter (not shown in detail) at a step ST-14. Subsequently, the filtered projection data are processed by a scaling process at a step ST-16. Finally, the scaling-processed projection data (corresponding to the scan data) are displayed as a scanogram 22 (see Fig. 6) on the display unit 4 at a step ST-18. Then, this flow operation is repeated from the previous step ST-10.

As a consequence, the scanogram 22 of the patient 20 can be obtained by processing only the helically-scanned X-ray projection data acquired at the specific projection angle (0°) in the scan data processing unit 6 under control of the main controller 50.

On the other hand, if helically-scanned X-ray projection data acquired at another specific projection angle "180°" indicated by a dot line of Fig. 4 are also processed to obtain such a scan data, the following additional process step is required in the process flow shown in Fig. 4. That is, after the helically-scanned projection data acquired at two specific projection angles of 0° and 180° are read out at the step ST-10 and processed by the curved plane/flat plane transformation at the step ST-12, only the processed projection data acquired at the specific projection angle 180° are rearranged at a step ST-13. This is because the positional relationship of the detector channel is completely opposite to each other with respect to the projection angles 0° and 180°.

The above-described scanogram formation will now be pictorially explained with reference to Fig. 5. Fig. 5 represents a so-called "sinogram" 25 constructed of a plurality of projection data "D1", "D2", ... "D5". A desirable scanogram 22 is obtained by arranging these projection data "D1 (angle of 0°)", "D2 (angle of 180°)", ... "D5 (angle of 360°)" along the longitudinal direction of the patient 20. As previously described, it should be noted that since the arrangement of the projection data D1, D3, D5 acquired at the angle of 0° along the detector's channel direction is completely reversed with respect to that of the projection data D2, D4 acquired at the angle of 180°, either projection data should be rearranged in order to obtain the desirable scanogram 22.

Referring back to Fig. 2, the above-described series of helically-scanned X-ray projection data are preprocessed in the preprocessing unit 5, and thereafter are reconstructed in the image reconstructing unit 7 so as to produce desirable CT image data under control of the main controller. Both of this desirable CT image data and the above-mentioned scan data are synthe-

sized in the synthesizing unit 8, so that both of a desirable CT image 21 and a desirable scanogram 22 are simultaneously displayed on the same screen of the display unit 4. In this scanogram 22, a line "L_x" indicates a position on the patient 20, where this CT image 21 has been obtained.

In accordance with the first X-ray CT imaging system 100, since both of the scanogram 22 and the CT image 21 can be obtained at the same time by performing only a single helical scanning operation with respect to the patient 20, the entire medical examination time during which the patient 20 must endure can be considerably reduced, as compared with that of the conventional X-ray CT imaging system. Accordingly, since such a lengthy and afflictive medical examination can be mitigated, this X-ray CT imaging system 100 is suitable for a so-called "group diagnosis" in which X-ray imaging portions of patients are previously determined and a large number of medical examination processes must be carried out within a limited time period.

Moreover, since the scanogram 22 and the CT image 21 are produced from the same helically-scanned X-ray projection data, there is no positional shift in both of these images. This implies that the positional precision of the CT image can be considerably improved, as compared with that of the conventional CT imaging system.

As apparent from the foregoing descriptions, although the projection angles of the first X-ray CT imaging system 100 are selected to be 0°, 90° and 180°, any other projection angles such as 1°, 150°, 292° may be freely selected to obtain the scanograms.

ARRANGEMENT OF SECOND X-RAY CT IMAGING SYSTEM

Referring now to Figs. 7 and 8, an arrangement of an X-ray CT imaging system 200 according to a second preferred embodiment of the present invention will be described.

In the arrangement shown in Fig. 7, a scan data process unit 60 is employed in the process unit 3 and a main controller 52 is employed. Under control of the main controller 52, a series of helically-scanned X-ray projection data are acquired by the X-ray scanner 2 at two specific projection angles of 0° and 90°. Then, one scanogram 26 is obtained as a top view (0°) and the other scanogram 27 is obtained as a side view (90°), as indicated in Fig. 10, which are produced in the scan data process unit 60 under control of the main controller 52.

OPERATION OF SECOND X-RAY CT IMAGING SYSTEM

Referring now to a flow chart of Fig. 9, an overall operation of the second X-ray CT imaging system 200 will be described. Similarly, acquisition timings (projec-

tion angles) of the helically-scanned X-ray projection data and projection data process operations are represented at a lefthand portion of Fig. 9, whereas an operation flow of the second CT imaging system 200 is indicated at a righthand portion of Fig. 9.

As apparent from the lefthand portion of Fig. 9, both of the scanogram production and the CT image reconstruction are simultaneously performed at the respective specific projection angles of 0° and 90°, whereas only the CT image reconstruction is carried out at any projection angles other than the specific projection angles.

At a first step ST-20, a series of helically-scanned X-ray projection data are acquired by the X-ray scanner 2 under control of the main controller 52, and then are preprocessed in the preprocess unit 5 under control of the main controller 52. At the subsequent step ST-21, a check is made as to whether or not the helically-scanned projection data has been acquired at the first specific projection angle of 0°. If YES, then the process operation is advanced to a step ST-22 at which the scano data process for the top view 26 (see Fig. 10) is performed in the scano data process unit 60 with respect to the helically-scanned projection data acquired at the angle of 0°.

To the contrary, if the helically-scanned projection data does not correspond to the projection data acquired at the first specific projection angle of 0° at the previous step ST-21, then the process operation is jumped to a further step ST-23. At this step ST-23, another check is made as to whether or not this helically-scanned projection data has been acquired at the second specific projection angle of 90°. If YES, then the process operation is advanced to the next step ST-24 at which the scano data process for the side view 27 (see Fig. 10) is executed in the scano data process unit 60 under control of the main controller 52.

Conversely, if the helically-scanned projection data has not been acquired at the second specific projection angle of 90° at the previous step ST-23, then the process operation is jumped to a further step ST-25. At this step ST-25, the CT image reconstruction process is carried out with respect to the projection data in the image reconstruction unit 7 under control of the main controller 52. Thereafter, the above-described process operation is repeated from the first step ST-20. The resultant CT image 23 produced at the step ST-25 may be displayed in combination with both of the top-viewed scanogram 26 and the side-viewed scanogram 27, as represented in Fig. 10, if required.

It should be noted that all of the helically-scanned X-ray projection data acquired at both of the first and second specific projection angles of 0° and 90°, are similarly processed in the image reconstruction unit 7 to obtain CT images acquired at these specific projection angles.

In accordance with the above-described second X-ray CT imaging system 200, since both of the top-

viewed scanogram 26 and the side-viewed scanogram 27 can be obtained at the same time, such a multiple image display can be realized in, for instance, a 1024-matrix display unit 40, as represented in Fig. 10.

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ARRANGEMENT OF THIRD X-RAY CT IMAGING SYSTEM

10 In Fig. 11, there is shown an arrangement of an X-ray CT imaging system 300 according to a third preferred embodiment of the present invention.

15 A major feature of this third X-ray CT imaging system 300 is such that a scano data process unit 65 is employed in the process unit 3 and is operated in conjunction with a mode selector 80 under control of a main controller 54 to select the operation mode of the third X-ray CT imaging system 300. That is, a selection is made between only scano data process, and also a combination of the scano data process with the CT image reconstruction process via the mode selector 80 by an operator. As shown in Figs. 12A to 12C, the mode selector 80 issues a mode selecting signal of Fig. 12B to the main controller 54. Then, if only the scano data process (scanogram formation) is selected, an X-ray projection control signal shown in Fig. 12A is produced from the main controller 54 only at a preselected projection angle, e.g., 0°. Accordingly, the X-ray tube 10 of Fig. 11 is energized in response to this X-ray projection control signal, so that X-ray beams are projected therefrom only at the preselected projection angle of 0°. Thus, there is a merit that the patient 20 receives only a limited quantity of X-ray dose during this operation mode. In other words, although both of the X-ray tube 10 and the X-ray detector unit 12 are helically scanned around the patient 20, the X-ray beams are intermittently projected from the X-ray tube 10 during the helical scanning operation at the preselected projection angle, which does not correspond to the normal helical scanning operation (will be referred to a "partial X-ray projection").

20 To the contrary, if the operator selects the combination process (namely, the scano data process and the CT image reconstruction process) by the mode selector 80, another mode selecting signal is issued from the main controller 54. Then, the above-described normal helical scanning operation is carried out (will be referred to a "circumferential X-ray projection"), so that while the scanogram data is produced in the scano data process unit 65, the X-ray CT image is reconstructed in the image reconstruction unit 7.

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OPERATION OF THIRD X-RAY CT IMAGING SYSTEM

Fig. 13 represents a flow chart of overall operation by the third X-ray CT imaging system 300 of Fig. 11.

At a first step ST-30, a check is done as to whether or not the X-ray imaging operation is completed. If NO, then the process operation is advanced to the next step ST-31 at which mode sampling is performed. Then,

another check is made as to whether or not only the scan data process is selected. If NO, then the process operation is advanced to the subsequent step ST-33. At this step ST-33, since the combination process of the scan data and the CT image reconstruction is selected by the operator via the mode selector 80, the above-described normal helically-scanned X-ray projection data are acquired by the X-ray scanner 2 and thereafter preprocessed in the preprocess unit 5 under control of the main controller 54.

Subsequently, another check is made as to whether or not the helically-scanned projection data is acquired at the specific projection angle of 0° at a step ST-34. If YES, then the process operation is advanced to the next step ST-35 at which the scan data process is performed by the scan data process unit 65 under control of the main controller 54. To the contrary, if NO at the previous step ST-34, then the process operation is jumped to a step ST-36. Then, the X-ray CT image reconstruction process is performed for this helically-scanned projection data in the image reconstruction unit 7 under control of the main controller. After this image reconstruction process has been accomplished at the step ST-36, a further check is made as to whether or not the helically-scanned projection data have been acquired/processed from 0° to 360° (i.e., circumferential X-ray projection process). If NO, then the process operation is returned to the step ST-33, so that a series of projection data process operations is again carried out until the step ST-37. If YES, then the process operation is returned to the first step ST-30, because the combination process operation mode selected by the operator via the mode selector 80 has been completed. Thus, the circumferential X-ray projection (see Fig. 14) is achieved.

On the other hand, if the only scan data process mode is selected (i.e., "YES"), then the process operation is advanced to a new step ST-40. At this step ST-40, a predetermined projection angle, for instance, 0° in the third X-ray CT imaging system 300 is detected under control of the main controller 54. Next, under control of the main controller 54, the X-ray beam is projected from the X-ray tube 10 only at the projection angle of 0° at a step ST-42.

As a result, only 0°-projection data are acquired from the X-ray scanner 2 and then preprocessed by the preprocess unit 5 under control of the main controller 54. Thus, the scan data process operation is executed only for these 0°-projection data in the scan data process unit 65, so that the partial X-ray projection (see Fig. 14) is achieved.

In accordance with the third X-ray CT imaging system 300, there are the following particular advantages. In general, a display region of a scanogram is relatively larger than that of a CT image on a display screen. Furthermore, since an operator observes a CT image with reference to a scanogram, it is suitable for easy observation to display the scanogram with a larger area than

that of the CT image on a display screen. To this end, if X-ray beams are projected from the X-ray tube 10 to the patient 20 over the circumferential helical-direction, a total amount of X-ray dose is increased, as compared with that of the partial X-ray projection. Therefore, according to the third X-ray CT imaging system 300, the mode selector 80 manipulated by an operator is newly employed and can select such a partial X-ray projection in conjunction with the main controller 54 to obtain a scanogram under lower X-ray dose. Moreover, when a desirable CT imaging portion 70 of the patient is reached during the helical scanning operation by the X-ray scanner 2 while observing a first scanogram "72F" in real time, an operator manipulates the mode selector 80 to change the partial X-ray projection mode into the circumferential X-ray projection mode. After this circumferential X-ray projection (namely, normal helical scanning operation) has been accomplished for the desirable CT imaging portion 70, the operator again manipulates the mode selector 80 to change the circumferential X-ray projection mode into the partial X-ray projection mode, so that a second scanogram "72R" will be produced. As a consequence, a total amount of X-ray dose given to the patient 20 can be considerably reduced, as compared with in the conventional X-ray CT imaging system.

ARRANGEMENT/OPERATION OF FOURTH X-RAY CT IMAGING SYSTEM

Fig. 15 represents an arrangement of an X-ray CT imaging system 400 according to a fourth preferred embodiment of the present invention. A major feature of the fourth X-ray CT imaging system 400 is to employ a scanogram/CT image processing unit 90 in the process unit 3. This scanogram/CT image processing unit 90 is capable of performing a scan data process operation and a CT image reconstruction operation.

When the scanogram/CT image processing unit 90 is operable at a high speed, the entire processing operation of the fourth X-ray CT imaging system 400 is executed in accordance with a flow chart shown in Fig. 16A. At a first step ST-50 of this flow chart, the helically-scanned X-ray projection data are acquired by the X-ray scanner 2 and thereafter are preprocessed by the preprocess unit 5 under control of the main controller 56. Subsequently, a check is done as to whether or not the preprocessed projection data have been acquired at the specific projection angle 0° or 180° at a step ST-52. If YES, then the scan data process operation is carried out for these projection data acquired at the specific projection angle of 0° or 180° at a high speed at the next step ST-54. Then, the CT image reconstruction operation is performed based on these projection data at a step ST-56. A resultant CT image (not shown) reconstructed at this step ST-56 may be displayed on the display unit 4 in combination with a scanogram (not shown either) combined in the synthesizer unit 8. If NO at the

step ST-52, then the process operation is jumped to the step ST-56 at which the above-described CT image reconstruction process is performed. Then, a series of the above-described highspeed process operation is repeatedly executed.

To the contrary, when the scanogram/CT image processing unit 90 is operated at a low speed, the entire processing operation of the fourth X-ray CT imaging system 400 is executed in accordance with a flow chart shown in Fig. 16B. Since the process operations from the step ST-50 to the step ST-54 are identical to those of Fig. 16A, only different process operation will be explained. That is, after the scan data process is accomplished at the step ST-54, the preprocessed X-ray projection data are once stored into a memory (not shown in detail) at the next step ST-55. Thereafter, the stored projection data are read out from the memory and are processed to reconstruct a CT image at a step ST-57.

As previously stated, according to the fourth X-ray CT imaging system 400, there are such particular advantages that the overall medical examination time for the patient can be considerably shortened even if both of the scanogram and the X-ray CT image thereof are produced, since only one helical scanning operation is required. Also, a total amount of X-ray dose given to the patient can be reduced, as compared with that of the conventional X-ray CT imaging system.

Claims

1. An X-ray computerized tomographic imaging method comprising the steps of:

scanning a biological body (20) under medical examination in a helical scanning mode, while relatively rotating an X-ray tube (10) around the biological body (20) translated along a longitudinal axis of the biological body (20), to acquire X-ray projection image data about the helically-scanned biological body (20); and reconstructing an X-ray CT image (21) of said helically-scanned biological body (20) based upon said entire X-ray projection image data,

characterized by further comprising the steps of:

selecting only X-ray projection image data acquired at a predetermined projection angle from the entire X-ray projection image data obtained at the helical-scanning step; and processing said selected X-ray projection image data to produce a scanogram (22) of said helically-scanned biological body (20),

wherein both of said scanogram (22) and said X-ray CT image (21) are sub-

stantially simultaneously displayed.

2. An X-ray computerized tomographic imaging method comprising the steps of:

scanning a first portion of a biological body (20) under medical examination in a helical scanning mode, while relatively rotating an X-ray tube (10) around the biological body (20) translated along a longitudinal axis of the biological body (20), to acquire first X-ray projection image data about the helically-scanned first portion of the biological body (20); and reconstructing an X-ray CT image (21) of said helically-scanned first portion of the biological body (20) based upon said first X-ray projection image data,

characterized by further comprising the steps of:

producing a scanogram of said first portion of said biological body (20); partially scanning a second portion of said biological body (20) under medical examination by intermittently projecting an X-ray beam to the second portion of the biological body (20) from the X-ray tube (10), to acquire second X-ray projection image data about the helically-scanned second portion of the biological body (20); and processing said second X-ray projection image data to produce a scanogram (22) of said partially-scanned second portion of the biological body (20),

wherein both of said scanogram (22) and said X-ray CT image (21) are substantially simultaneously displayed.

3. An imaging method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein said predetermined projection angle is selected from any of 0°, 90° and 180° with respect to a base line located within a plane perpendicular to said longitudinal axis of the biological body (20).

4. An imaging method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said predetermined projection angle is selected from any two combined angles of 0°, 90° and 180° with respect to a base line located within a plane perpendicular to said longitudinal axis of the biological body (20).

5. An imaging method as claimed in any of claims 1, 3 and 4, wherein said processing step includes the steps of:

executing a curved plane/flat plane transformation with regard to said selected X-ray projection image data acquired at said predetermined

projection angle to obtain plane-transformed X-ray projection image data;
executing a highpass filtering operation with respect to the plane-transformed X-ray projection image data to obtain filtered X-ray projection image data, and
executing a density conversion with regard to the filtered X-ray projection image data to obtain density-converted X-ray projection image data, whereby said scanogram (22) is produced based upon the density-converted X-ray projection image data. 5

6. An imaging method as claimed in claim 5, wherein said processing step further includes the step of:
rearranging the plane-transformed X-ray projection image data when being acquired at a second projection angle opposite to said predetermined projection angle, whereby the rearranged X-ray projection image data acquired at said second projection angle correspond to the plane-transformed X-ray projection image data acquired at said predetermined projection angle. 15 20 25

7. An X-ray computerized tomographic imaging system (100, 400) comprising:
scanning means (2) including an X-ray tube (10), for scanning a biological body (20) under medical examination in a helical scanning mode, while relatively rotating said X-ray tube (10) around the biological body (20) translated along a longitudinal axis of the biological body (20), to acquire X-ray projection image data about the helically-scanned biological body (20); 30 35

CT image reconstruction means (7) for reconstructing an X-ray CT image (21) of said helically-scanned biological body (20) based upon said entire X-ray projection image data; and display means for displaying said X-ray CT image (21),
characterized by further comprising: 40 45

scano-data processing means (6, 90) for selecting only X-ray projection image data acquired at a predetermined projection angle from the entire X-ray projection image data, and for processing said selected X-ray projection image data to produce a scanogram (22) of said helically-scanned biological body (20),
wherein said display means substantially simultaneously displays both of said scanogram (22) and said X-ray CT image (21). 50 55

8. An X-ray computerized tomographic imaging system (300) comprising:
scanning means (2) including an X-ray tube (10), for scanning a first portion of a biological body (20) under medical examination in a helical scanning mode, while relatively rotating an X-ray tube (10) around the biological body (20) translated along a longitudinal axis of the biological body (20), to acquire first X-ray projection image data about the helically-scanned first portion of the biological body (20);
CT image reconstruction means (7) for reconstructing an X-ray CT image (21) of said helically-scanned biological body (20) based upon said first X-ray projection image data; and display means (4) for displaying said X-ray CT image (21),
characterized in that
said scanning means partially scans a second portion of said biological body (20) by intermittently projecting an X-ray beam of said X-ray tube (10) to the second portion of the biological body (20), to acquire second X-ray projection image data about the partially-scanned second portion of the biological body (20),
said system further comprises scano-data processing means (65) for processing said first and second X-ray projection image data to produce a scanogram (22) of said first portion and of said partially-scanned second portion of the biological body (20),
wherein said display means (4) substantially simultaneously displays both of said scanogram (22) and said X-ray CT image (21). 60 65

9. An imaging system (100, 300, 400) as claimed in claim 7 or 8, wherein said predetermined projection angle is selected from any of 0°, 90° and 180° with respect to a base line located within a plane perpendicular to said longitudinal axis of the biological body (20). 70

10. An imaging system (100, 300, 400) as claimed in claim 7 or 8, wherein said scano-data processing means (6, 90) includes:
means for executing a curved plane/flat plane transformation with regard to said selected X-ray projection image data acquired at said predetermined projection angle to obtain plane-transformed X-ray projection image data;
means for executing a highpass filtering operation with respect to the plane-transformed X-ray projection image data to obtain filtered X- 75 80 85

ray projection image data, and
means for executing a density conversion with
regard to the filtered X-ray projection image
data to obtain density-converted X-ray projection
image data, whereby said scanogram (22)
is produced based upon the density-converted
X-ray projection image data. 5

11. An imaging system (100, 300, 400) as claimed in
claim 10, wherein said scano-data processing
means (6, 65, 90) further includes: 10

means for rearranging the plane-transformed
X-ray projection image data when being
acquired at a second projection angle opposite
to said predetermined projection angle,
whereby the rearranged X-ray projection image
data acquired at said second projection angle
correspond to the plane-transformed X-ray projection
image data acquired at said predetermined projection angle. 15

12. An imaging system (100, 400) as claimed in claim 7
or 8, further comprising: 20

preprocessing means (5) for preprocessing
said X-ray projection image data obtained from
said scanning means (2) to produce the pre-
processed X-ray projection image data to be
supplied to both of said scano-data processing
means (6, 90) and said CT image reconstructing
means (7); and
synthesizing means (8) for synthesizing said
scanogram (22) and said X-ray CT image (21)
to be substantially displayed on said display
means (4, 40). 25

Patentansprüche

1. Computertomographisches Röntgenstrahl-Abbildungsverfahren, das die folgenden Schritte aufweist: 40

Abtasten eines in medizinischer Untersuchung
befindlichen biologischen Körpers (20) in einer
Betriebsart mit schraubenlinienförmiger Abtastung,
wobei eine Röntgenröhre (10) um den
biologischen Körper (20), der entlang einer
Längsachse des biologischen Körpers (20)
verschoben wird, relativgedreht wird, um hier-
durch Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten
bezüglich des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten
biologischen Körpers (20) zu erzielen,
und
Rekonstruieren eines computertomographi-
schen Röntgenbilds (21) des schraubenlinien-
förmig abgetasteten biologischen Körpers (20)
auf der Grundlage der gesamten Röntgen- 45

strahl-Projektionsbilddaten,
gekennzeichnet durch die weiteren
Schritte:

Auswählen lediglich von solchen Röntgen-
strahl-Projektionsbilddaten, die bei einem
vorbestimmten Projektionswinkel erhalten
wurden, aus den gesamten Röntgenstrahl-
Projektionsbilddaten, die bei der schrau-
benlinienförmigen Abtastung erhalten wur-
den, und

Verarbeiten der ausgewählten Röntgen-
strahl-Projektionsbilddaten zur Erzeugung
eines Scannogramms (Abtastbilds) (22)
des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten
biologischen Körpers (20),

wobei sowohl das Scannogramm
(22) als auch das computertomographi-
sche Röntgenbild (21) im wesentlichen
gleichzeitig angezeigt werden.

2. Computertomographisches Röntgenstrahl-Abbil-
dungsverfahren, das die Schritte aufweist:

Abtasten eines ersten Abschnitts eines in
medizinischer Untersuchung befindlichen bio-
logischen Körpers (20) in einer Betriebsart mit
schraubenlinienförmiger Abtastung, wobei eine
Röntgenröhre (10) um den biologischen Kör-
per (20), der entlang einer Längsachse des
biologischen Körpers (20) verschoben wird,
relativgedreht wird, um hierdurch erste Rönt-
genstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten bezüglich des
schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten, ersten
Abschnitts des biologischen Körpers (20) zu
erhalten, und

Rekonstruieren eines computertomographi-
schen Röntgenbilds (21) des schraubenlinien-
förmig abgetasteten ersten Abschnitts des
biologischen Körpers (20) auf der Grundlage
der ersten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten,
gekennzeichnet durch die weiteren
Schritte:

Erzeugen eines Scannogramms (Abtast-
bilds) des ersten Abschnitts des bio-
logischen Körpers (20),
teilweises Abtasten eines zweiten
Abschnitts des in medizinischer Untersu-
chung befindlichen biologischen Körpers
(20) durch intermittierendes Aussenden
eines Röntgenstrahls von der Röntgen-
röhre (10) zu dem zweiten Abschnitt des
Körpers (20), um hierdurch zweite Rönt-
genstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten bezüglich
des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten
zweiten Abschnitts des biologischen Kör-
pers (20) zu gewinnen, und

Verarbeiten der zweiten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zur Erzeugung eines Scannogramms (Abtastbilds) (22) des teilweise abgetasteten zweiten Abschnitts des biologischen Körpers (20),

wobei sowohl das Scannogramm (22) als auch das computertomographische Röntgenbild (21) im wesentlichen gleichzeitig angezeigt werden.

3. Abbildungsverfahren nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, bei dem der vorbestimmte Projektionswinkel aus den Werten 0°, 90° und 180° mit Bezug zu einer Basislinie ausgewählt ist, die innerhalb einer Ebene liegt, die rechtwinklig zu der Längsachse des biologischen Körpers (20) verläuft.

4. Abbildungsverfahren nach Anspruch 2, bei dem der vorbestimmte Projektionswinkel aus jeweils zwei kombinierten Winkeln mit den Werten 0°, 90° und 180° mit Bezug zu einer Basislinie ausgewählt ist, die in einer Ebene liegt, die rechtwinklig zu der Längsachse des biologischen Körpers (20) verläuft.

5. Abbildungsverfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 1, 3 und 4, bei dem der Verarbeitungsschritt die Schritte enthält:

Durchführen einer Transformation von gekrümmter Ebene zu flacher Ebene im Hinblick auf die ausgewählten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, die bei dem vorbestimmten Projektionswinkel erhalten wurden, um hierdurch in eine Ebene transformierte Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zu gewinnen,

Durchführen einer Hochpaßfilterung hinsichtlich der in die Ebene transformierten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, um hierdurch gefilterte Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zu gewinnen, und

Durchführen einer Dichteumwandlung im Hinblick auf die gefilterten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, um hierdurch hinsichtlich ihrer Dichte umgewandelte Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zu gewinnen, wobei das Scannogramm (22) auf der Grundlage der hinsichtlich ihrer Dichte umgewandelten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten erzeugt wird.

6. Abbildungsverfahren nach Anspruch 5, bei dem der Verarbeitungsschritt den weiteren Schritt enthält:

Umordnen der in die Ebene transformierten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, wenn diese bei einem zweiten Projektionswinkel, der entgegengesetzt zu dem vorbestimmten Projektionswinkel liegt, gewonnen wurden, derart,

dass die umgeordneten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, die bei dem zweiten Projektionswinkel gewonnen wurden, den in die Ebene transformierten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten entsprechen, die bei dem vorbestimmten Projektionswinkel gewonnen wurden.

7. Computertomographisches Röntgenbildgabesystem (100, 400), mit

einer Abtasteinrichtung (2), die eine Röntgenröhre (10) enthält und zum Abtasten eines in medizinischer Untersuchung befindlichen biologischen Körpers (20) in einer Betriebsart mit schraubenlinienförmiger Abtastung ausgelegt ist, wobei die Röntgenröhre (10) um den biologischen Körper (20), der entlang einer Längsachse des biologischen Körpers (20) verschoben wird, relativgedreht wird, um hierdurch Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten bezüglich des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten, biologischen Körpers (20) zu erhalten, einer computertomographischen Bildrekonstruktionseinrichtung (7) zum Rekonstruieren eines computertomographischen Röntgenbilds (21) des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten biologischen Körpers (20) auf der Grundlage der gesamten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, und

einer Anzeigeeinrichtung zum Anzeigen des computertomographischen Röntgenbilds (21), gekennzeichnet durch die weiteren Merkmale:

eine Abtastdatenverarbeitungseinrichtung (6, 90) zum Auswählen lediglich derjenigen Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, die bei einem vorbestimmten Projektionswinkel erhalten wurden, aus den gesamten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, und zum Verarbeiten der ausgewählten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zur Erzeugung eines Scannogramms (Abtastbilds) (22) des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten biologischen Körpers (20),

wobei die Anzeigeeinrichtung sowohl das Scannogramm (22) als auch das computertomographische Röntgenbild (21) im wesentlichen gleichzeitig anzeigt.

8. Computertomographisches Röntgenbildgabesystem (300) mit

einer Abtasteinrichtung (2), die eine Röntgenröhre (10) enthält und zum Abtasten eines ersten Abschnitts eines in medizinischer Untersuchung befindlichen biologischen Körpers (20) in einer Betriebsart mit schraubenlinienförmiger Abtastung ausgelegt ist, wobei die Röntgenröhre (10) um den biologischen Körper (20), der entlang einer Längsachse des biologischen Körpers (20) verschoben wird, relativgedreht wird, um hierdurch Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten bezüglich des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten, biologischen Körpers (20) zu erhalten, einer computertomographischen Bildrekonstruktionseinrichtung (7) zum Rekonstruieren eines computertomographischen Röntgenbilds (21) des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten biologischen Körpers (20) auf der Grundlage der gesamten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, und

miger Abtastung ausgelegt ist, wobei die Röntgenröhre (10) um den biologischen Körper (20), der entlang einer Längsachse des biologischen Körpers (20) verschoben wird, relativgedreht wird, um hierdurch erste Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten bezüglich des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten ersten Abschnitts des biologischen Körpers (20) zu erhalten, einer computertomographischen Bildrekonstruktionseinrichtung (7) zum Rekonstruieren eines computertomographischen Röntgenbilds (21) des schraubenlinienförmig abgetasteten biologischen Körpers (20) auf der Grundlage der ersten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, und einer Anzeigeeinrichtung (4) zum Anzeigen des computertomographischen Röntgenbilds (21),

dadurch gekennzeichnet,

daß die Abtasteinrichtung einen zweiten Abschnitt des biologischen Körpers (20) durch intermittierendes Aussenden eines Röntgenstrahls von der Röntgenröhre (10) zu dem zweiten Abschnitt des biologischen Körpers (20) teilweise abtastet, um hierdurch zweite Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten bezüglich des teilweise abgetasteten zweiten Abschnitts des biologischen Körpers (20) zu gewinnen, daß das System weiterhin eine Abtastdatenverarbeitungseinrichtung (65) zum Verarbeiten der ersten und der zweiten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zur Erzeugung eines Scannogramms (Abtastbilds) (22) des ersten Abschnitts und des teilweise abgetasteten zweiten Abschnitts des biologischen Körpers (20) aufweist,

wobei die Anzeigeeinrichtung (4) sowohl das Scannogramm (22) als auch das computertomographische Röntgenbild (21) im wesentlichen gleichzeitig anzeigt.

9. Bildgabesystem (100, 300, 400) nach Anspruch 7 oder 8, bei dem der vorbestimmte Projektionswinkel aus einem der Werte 0°, 90° und 180° mit Bezug zu einer Basislinie ausgewählt ist, die in einer Ebene liegt, die rechtwinklig zu der Längsachse des biologischen Körpers (20) verläuft.

10. Bildgabesystem (100, 300, 400) nach Anspruch 7 oder 8, bei dem die Abtastdatenverarbeitungseinrichtung (6, 90) enthält:

eine Einrichtung zum Durchführen einer Transformation von einer gekrümmten Ebene in eine flache Ebene im Hinblick auf die ausgewählten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, die bei

dem vorbestimmten Projektionswinkel gewonnen wurden, um hierdurch in die Ebene transformierte Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zu erzielen,

eine Einrichtung zum Durchführen einer Hochpaßfilterung mit Bezug zu den in die Ebene transformierten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, um hierdurch gefilterte Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zu gewinnen, und eine Einrichtung zum Ausführen einer Dichtenumwandlung im Hinblick auf die gefilterten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zur Gewinnung von hinsichtlich ihrer Dichte umgewandelten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, wobei das Scannogramm (22) auf der Basis der hinsichtlich ihrer Dichte umgewandelten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten erzeugt wird.

20 11. Bildgabesystem (100, 300, 400) nach Anspruch 10, bei dem die Abtastdatenverarbeitungseinrichtung (6, 64, 90) weiterhin enthält:

25 eine Einrichtung zum Umordnen der in die Ebene transformierten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, wenn diese bei einem zweiten Projektionswinkel, der entgegengesetzt zu dem vorbestimmten Projektionswinkel liegt, gewonnen wurden, derart, daß die umgewandelten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, die bei dem zweiten Projektionswinkel gewonnen wurden, den in die Ebene transformierten Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten entsprechen, die bei dem vorbestimmten Projektionswinkel gewonnen wurden.

30 12. Bildgabesystem (100, 400) nach Anspruch 7 oder 8, mit

35 einer Vorverarbeitungseinrichtung (5) zum Vorverarbeiten der Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten, die von der Abtasteinrichtung (2) erhalten werden, um hierdurch vorverarbeitete Röntgenstrahl-Projektionsbilddaten zu erzeugen, die sowohl zu der Abtastdatenverarbeitungseinrichtung (6, 90) als auch zu der computertomographischen Bildrekonstruktionseinrichtung (7) zuzuführen sind, und einer Synthetisiereinrichtung (8) zum Synthetisieren des Scannogramms (22) und des computertomographischen Röntgenbilds (22) derart, daß diese im wesentlichen gleichzeitig auf der Anzeigeeinrichtung (4, 40) angezeigt werden.

55 Revendications

1. Procédé d'imagerie tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur, comprenant les étapes

consistant à :

- balayer un corps biologique (20) sous examen médical suivant un mode de balayage hélicoïdal, tout en faisant tourner relativement un tube à rayons X (10) autour du corps biologique (20) en translation le long d'un axe longitudinal du corps biologique (20) pour acquérir des données d'images en projection de rayons X concernant le corps biologique (20) balayé de façon hélicoïdale ; et 5
- reconstruire une image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21) dudit corps (20) balayé de façon hélicoïdale en se basant sur la totalité desdites données d'images en projection de rayons X, caractérisé en ce qu'il comprend en outre les étapes suivantes : 10
- choisir uniquement des données d'images en projection de rayons X acquises sous un angle de projection prédéterminé depuis des données d'images en projection de rayons X obtenues à l'étape de balayage hélicoïdal ; et 15
- traiter lesdites données d'images en projection de rayons X choisies pour produire un scannogramme (22) dudit corps biologique (20) balayé de façon hélicoïdale ; dans lequel ledit scannogramme (22) et ladite image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21) sont affichés tous deux de manière sensiblement simultanée. 20

2. Procédé d'imagerie tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur, comprenant les étapes consistant à : 25

- balayer une première partie d'un corps biologique (20) en cours d'examen médical dans un mode de balayage hélicoïdal, tout en faisant tourner relativement un tube à rayons X (10) autour du corps biologique (20) en translation le long d'un axe longitudinal du corps biologique (20), pour acquérir des premières données d'images en projection de rayons X concernant la première partie du corps biologique (20) balayé de façon hélicoïdale ; et 30
- reconstruire une image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21) de ladite première partie du corps biologique (20) balayé de façon hélicoïdale en se basant sur lesdites premières données d'images en projection de rayons X, caractérisé en ce qu'il comprend en outre les étapes consistant à : 35

- produire un scannogramme de ladite première partie dudit corps biologique (20) ;
- balayer partiellement une seconde partie dudit corps biologique (20) en cours d'examen médical en projetant de façon intermittente un faisceau de rayons X sur la seconde partie du corps biologique (20) depuis le tube à rayons X (10), pour acquérir des secondes données d'images en projection de rayons X concernant la seconde partie du corps biologique (20) balayé de façon hélicoïdale ; et
- traiter lesdites secondes données d'images en projection de rayons X pour produire un scannogramme (22) de ladite seconde partie partiellement balayée du corps biologique (20), dans lequel ledit scannogramme (22) et ladite image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21) sont tous deux affichés sensiblement simultanément. 40

3. Procédé d'imagerie selon l'une ou l'autre des revendications 1 et 2, dans lequel ledit angle de projection prédéterminé est choisi parmi l'un quelconque des angles que sont 0°, 90° et 180°, par rapport à une ligne de base située dans un plan perpendiculaire audit axe longitudinal du corps biologique (20). 45

4. Procédé d'imagerie selon la revendication 2, dans lequel ledit angle de projection prédéterminé est choisi parmi deux angles quelconques combinés des angles que sont 0°, 90° et 180° par rapport à une ligne de base située dans un plan perpendiculaire audit axe longitudinal du corps biologique (20). 50

5. Procédé d'imagerie selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1, 3 et 4, dans lequel ladite étape de traitement inclut les étapes consistant à :

- exécuter une transformation d'un plan incurvé à un plan plat en ce qui concerne lesdites données d'images choisies en projection de rayons X acquises sous ledit angle de projection prédéterminé pour obtenir des données d'images en projection de rayons X transformées dans un plan ;
- exécuter une opération de filtrage passe-haut en ce qui concerne les données d'images en projection de rayons X transformées dans un plan pour obtenir des données d'images en projection de rayons X filtrées, et
- exécuter une conversion de densité en ce qui concerne les données d'images en projection de rayons X filtrées pour obtenir des données d'images en projection de rayons X converties en densité, grâce à quoi ledit scannogramme 55

(22) est produit en se basant sur les données d'images en projection de rayons X converties en densité.

6. Procédé d'imagerie selon la revendication 5, dans lequel ladite étape de traitement inclut en outre l'étape consistant à :

- ré-arranger les données d'images en projection de rayons X transformées dans un plan lorsqu'elles sont acquises sous un second angle de projection opposé audit angle de projection pré-déterminé, grâce à quoi les données d'images en projection de rayons X ré-arrangées acquises sous ledit second angle de projection correspondent aux données d'images en projection de rayons X transformées dans un plan acquises sous ledit angle de projection pré-déterminé.

7. Procédé d'imagerie tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (100, 400) comprenant :

- des moyens de balayage (2) qui comprennent un tube à rayons X (10), pour balayer un corps biologique (20) en cours d'examen médical dans un mode de balayage hélicoïdal, pour balayer tout en faisant tourner relativement ledit tube à rayons X (10) autour du corps biologique (20) en translation le long d'un axe longitudinal du corps biologique (20), pour acquérir des données d'images en projection de rayons X concernant le corps biologique (20) balayé de manière hélicoïdale ;

- des moyens de reconstruction d'image tomographique assistée par ordinateur (7) pour reconstruire une image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21) dudit corps biologique (20) balayé de manière hélicoïdale en se basant sur la totalité desdites données d'images en projection de rayons X ; et

- des moyens d'affichage pour afficher ladite image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21), caractérisé en ce qu'il comprend en outre :

- des moyens de traitement de données de balayage (6, 90) pour choisir uniquement des données d'images en projection de rayons X acquises sous un angle de projection pré-déterminé depuis la totalité des données d'images en projection de rayons X, et pour traiter lesdites données d'images en projection de rayons X choisies pour produire un scannogramme (22) dudit corps biologique (20) balayé de manière hélicoïdale,

dans lequel lesdits moyens d'affichage affichent sensiblement simultanément à la fois ledit scannogramme (22) et ladite image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21).

8. Système d'imagerie tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (300), comprenant :

- des moyens de balayage (2) comprenant un tube à rayons X (10) pour balayer une première partie d'un corps biologique (20) en cours d'examen médical dans un mode de balayage hélicoïdal, tout en faisant tourner relativement un tube à rayons X (10) autour du corps biologique (20) en translation le long d'un axe longitudinal du corps biologique (20), pour acquérir des premières données d'images en projection de rayons X concernant la première partie balayée de façon hélicoïdale du corps biologique (20) ;
- des moyens de reconstruction d'image tomographique assistée par ordinateur (7) pour reconstruire une image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21) dudit corps biologique (20) balayé de manière hélicoïdale, en se basant sur lesdites premières données d'images en projection de rayons X ; et
- des moyens d'affichage (4) pour afficher ladite image tomographique à rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21), caractérisé en ce que
 - lesdits moyens de balayage balayent partiellement une seconde partie dudit corps biologique (20) en projetant par intermittence un faisceau de rayons X dudit tube à rayons X (10) vers la seconde partie du corps biologique (20), pour acquérir des secondes données d'images en projection de rayons X concernant la seconde partie partiellement balayée du corps biologique (20),
 - ledit système comprenant en outre des moyens de traitement de données de balayage (65) pour traiter lesdites premières et lesdites secondes données d'images en projection de rayons X pour produire un scannogramme (22) de ladite première partie et de ladite seconde partie partiellement balayée du corps biologique (20),
 - dans lequel lesdits moyens d'affichage (4) affichent sensiblement simultanément à la fois ledit scannogramme (22) et ladite image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21).

9. Système d'imagerie (100, 300, 400) selon l'une ou l'autre des revendications 7 et 8, dans lequel ledit angle de projection prédéterminé est choisi parmi l'un quelconque des angles que sont 0°, 90° et 180° par rapport à une ligne de base située dans un plan perpendiculaire audit axe longitudinal du corps biologique (20). 5

10. Système d'imagerie (100, 300, 400) selon l'une ou l'autre des revendications 7 et 8, dans lequel lesdits moyens de traitement de données de balayage (6, 90) comprennent : 10

- des moyens pour exécuter une transformation d'un plan courbe à un plan plat pour ce qui concerne desdites données d'images en projection de rayons X choisies acquises sous ledit angle de projection prédéterminé pour obtenir des données d'images en projection de rayons X transformées dans un plan ; 15
- des moyens pour exécuter une opération de filtration passe-haut pour ce qui concerne les données d'images en projection de rayons X transformées dans un plan pour obtenir des données d'images en projection de rayons X filtrées, et 20
- des moyens pour exécuter une conversion de densité pour ce qui concerne les données d'images en projection de rayons X filtrées pour obtenir des données d'images en projection de rayons X converties en densité, grâce à quoi ledit scannogramme (22) est produit en se basant sur les données d'images en projection de rayons X converties en densité. 25

30

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11. Système d'imagerie (100, 300, 400) selon la revendication 10, dans lequel lesdits moyens de traitement de données de balayage (6, 65, 90) incluent en outre : 40

- des moyens pour ré-arranger les données d'images en projection de rayons X transformées dans un plan lorsqu'elles sont acquises sous un second angle de projection opposé audit angle de projection prédéterminé, grâce à quoi les données d'images en projection de rayons X ré-arrangées acquises sous ledit second angle de projection correspondent aux données d'images en projection de rayons X transformées dans un plan qui sont acquises sous ledit angle de projection prédéterminé. 45

50

12. Système d'imagerie (100, 400) selon l'une ou l'autre des revendications 7 et 8, comprenant en outre : 55

- des moyens de pré-traitement (5) pour pré-traiter lesdites données d'images en projection de

rayons X obtenues depuis lesdits moyens de balayage (2) pour produire les données d'images en projection de rayons X pré-traitées à fournir à la fois auxdits moyens de traitement de données de balayage (6, 90) et auxdits moyens de reconstruction d'image tomographique assistée par ordinateur (7) ; et des moyens de synthèse (8) pour synthétiser ledit scannogramme (22) et ladite image tomographique par rayons X assistée par ordinateur (21) afin d'être affichés sensiblement sur lesdits moyens d'affichage (4, 40). 60

PRIOR ART
FIG. 1

SCANOGRAM 30

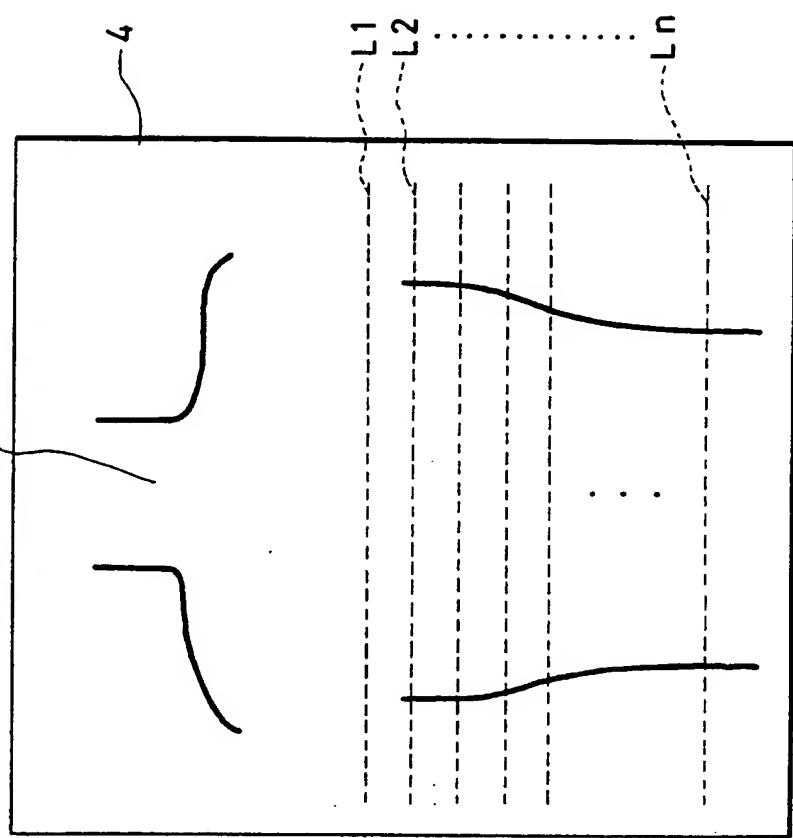


FIG. 2

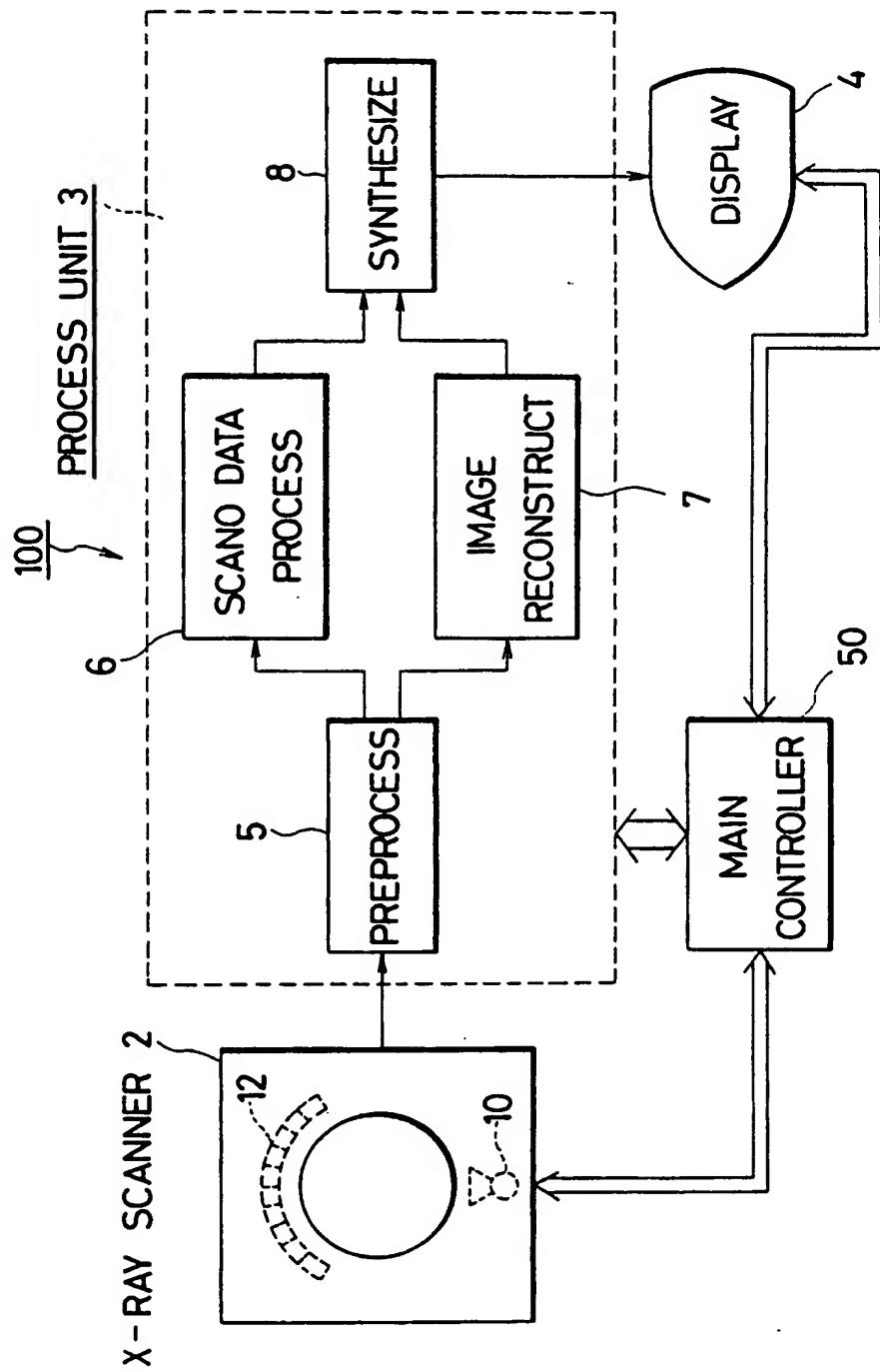


FIG. 3

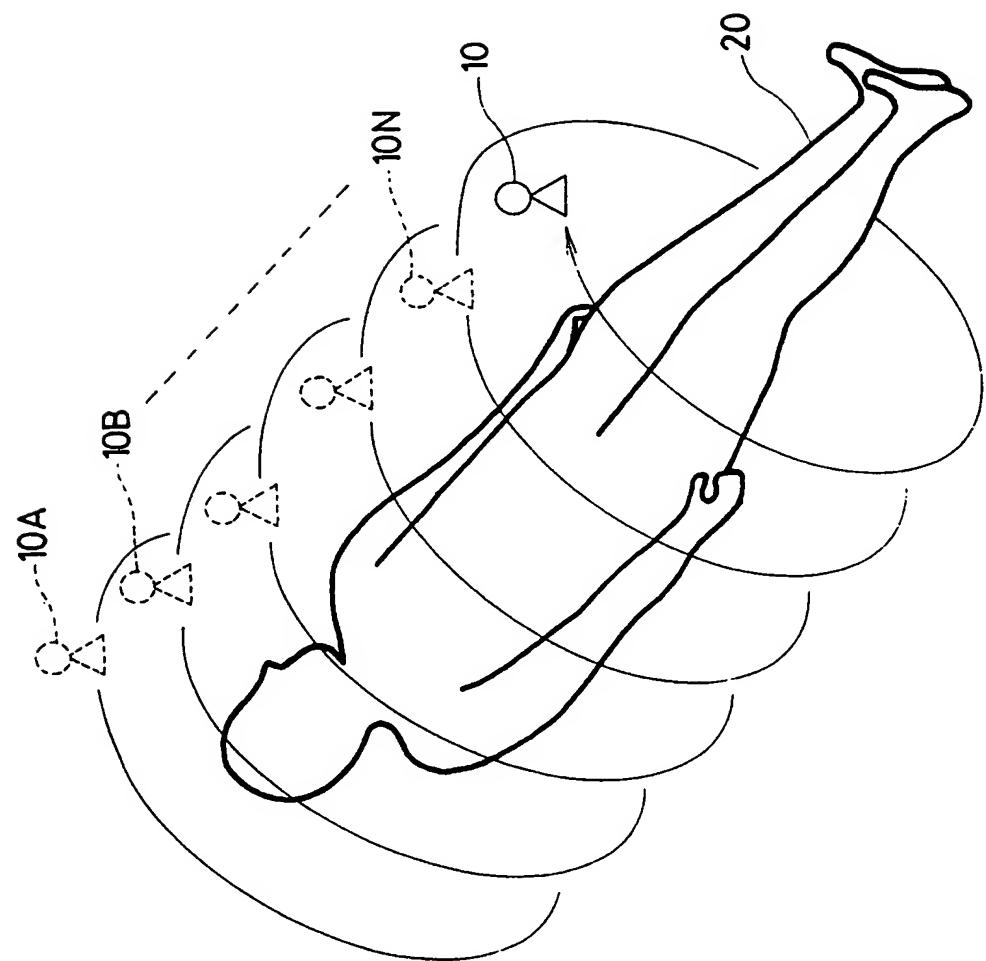


FIG. 4

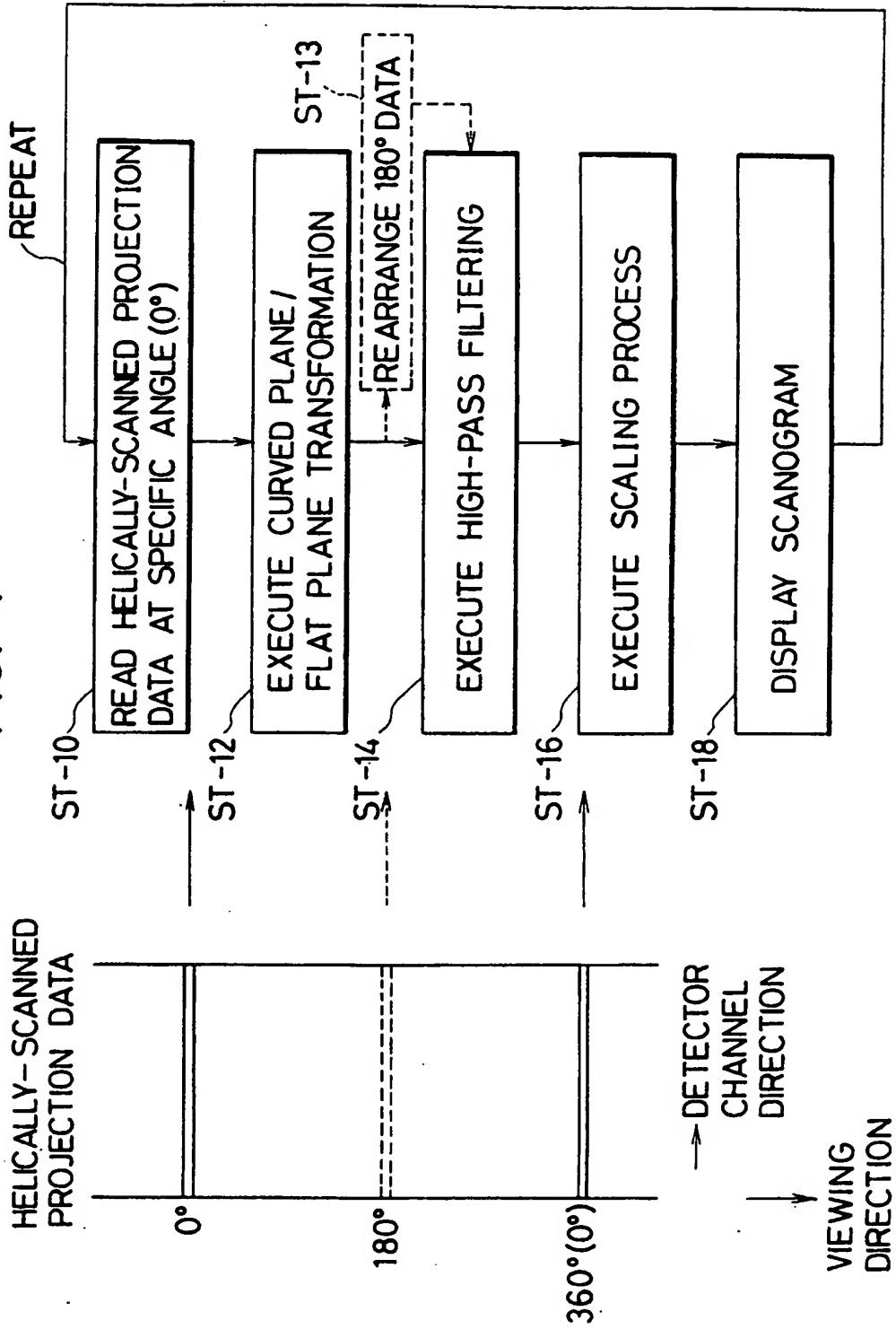


FIG. 5

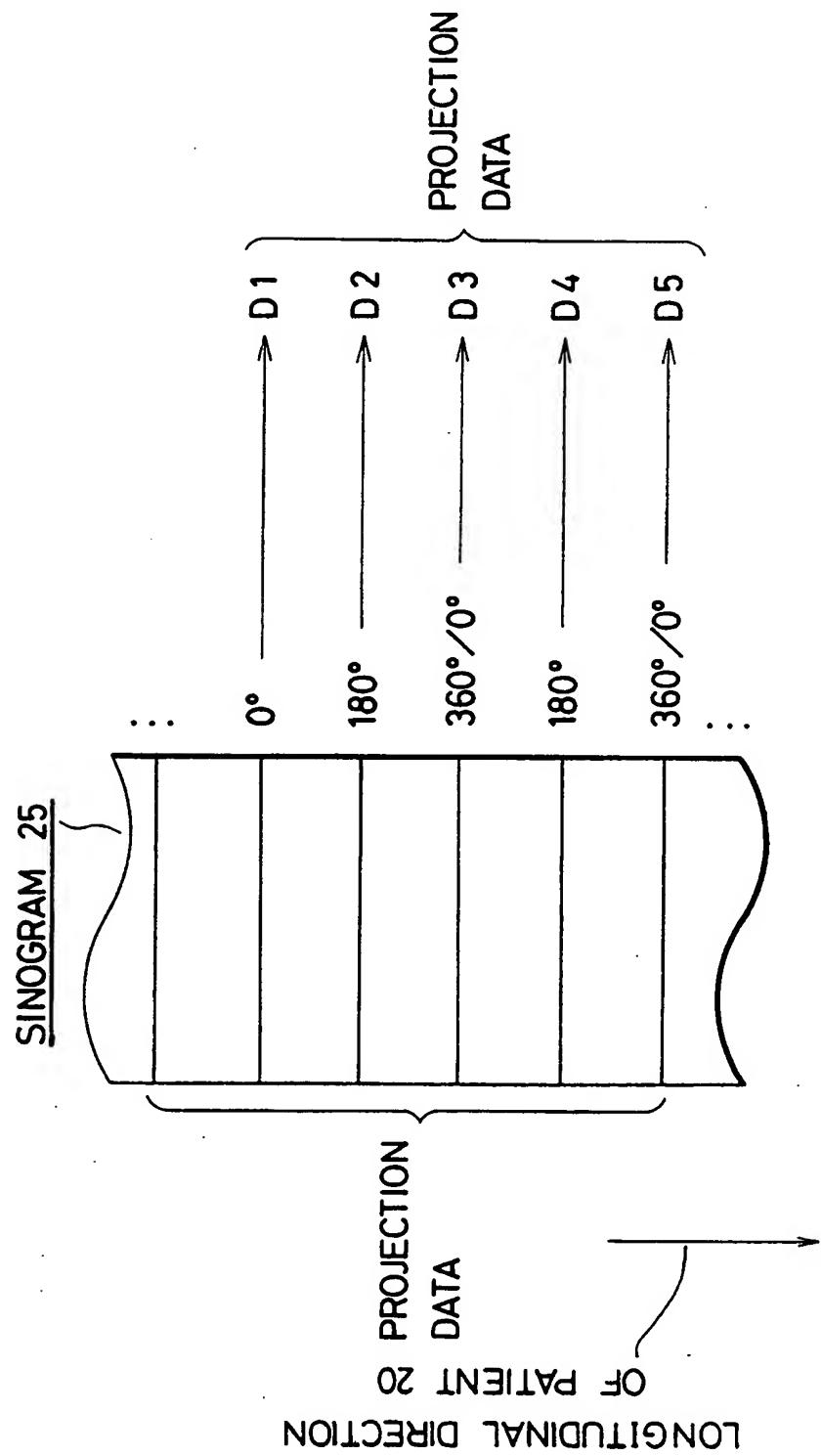


FIG. 6

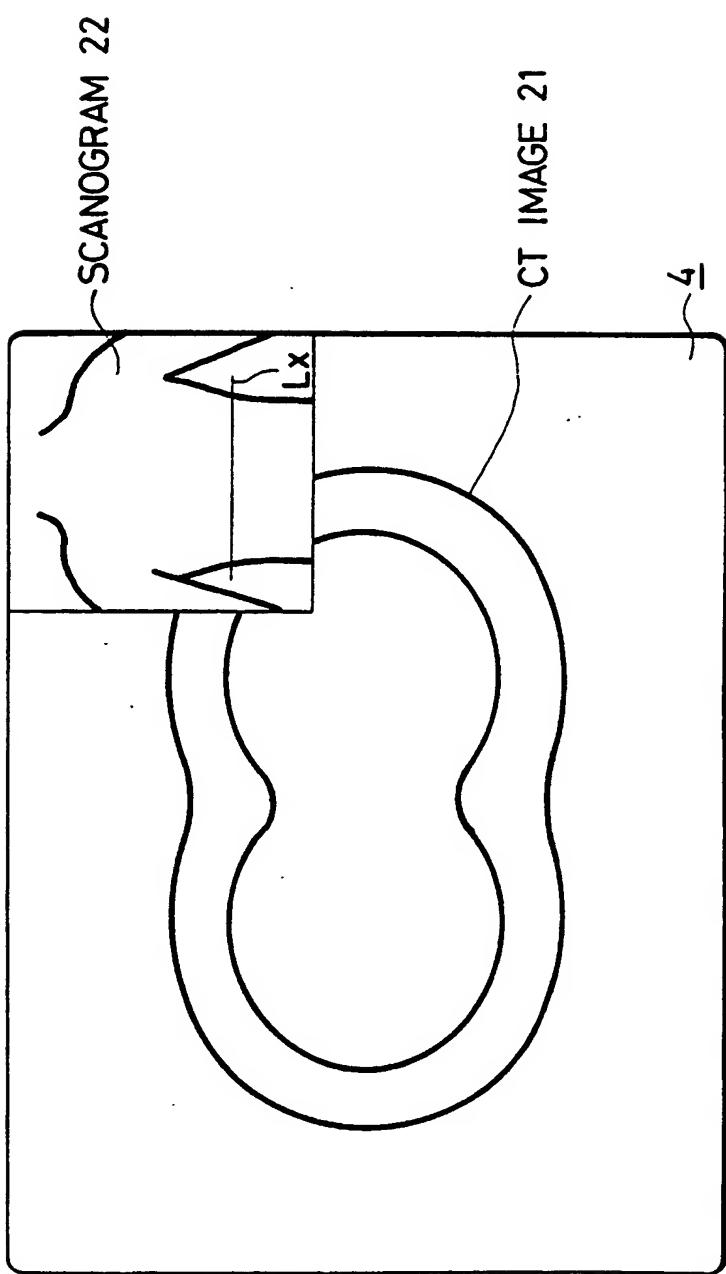


FIG. 7

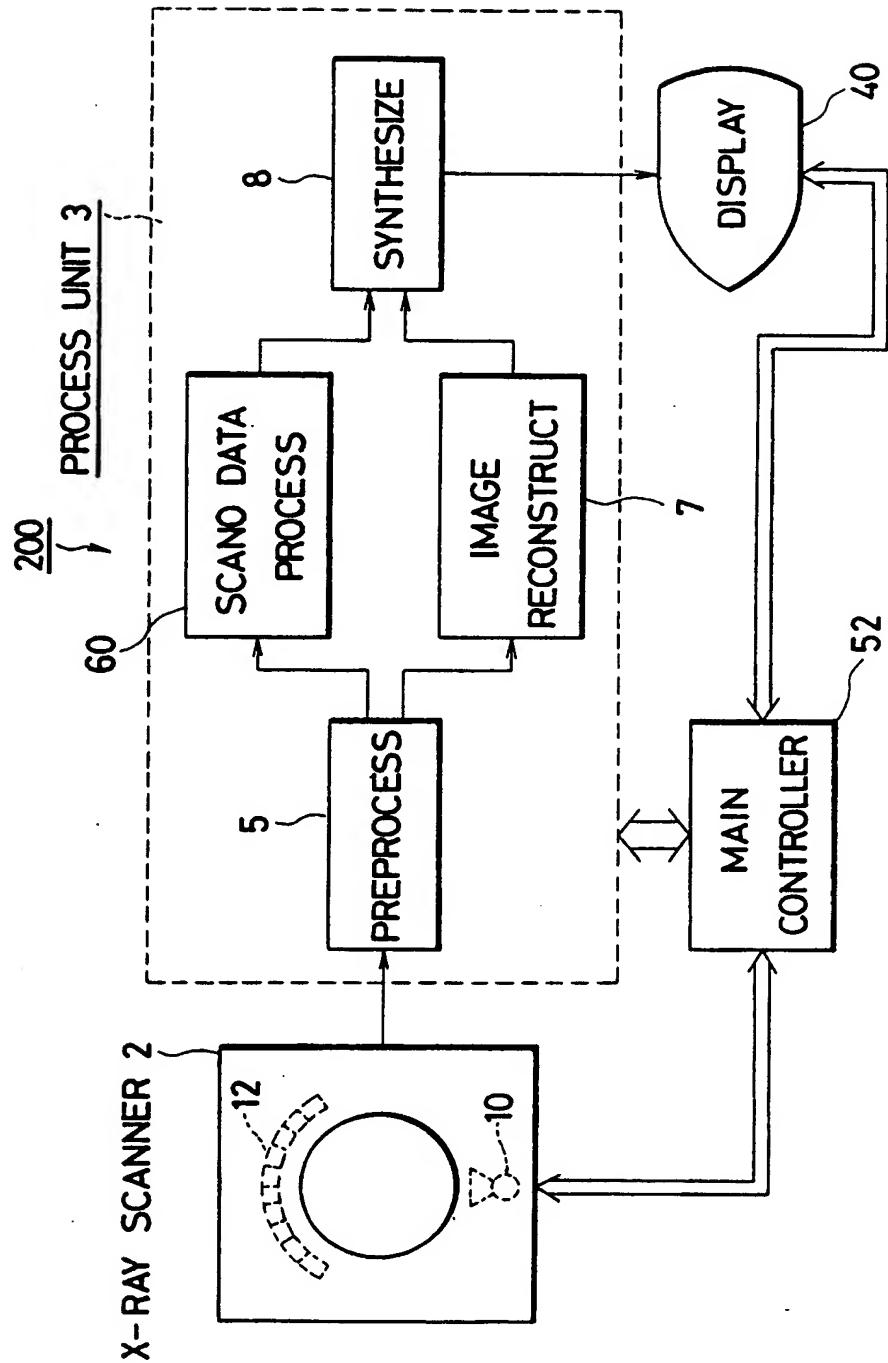


FIG. 8

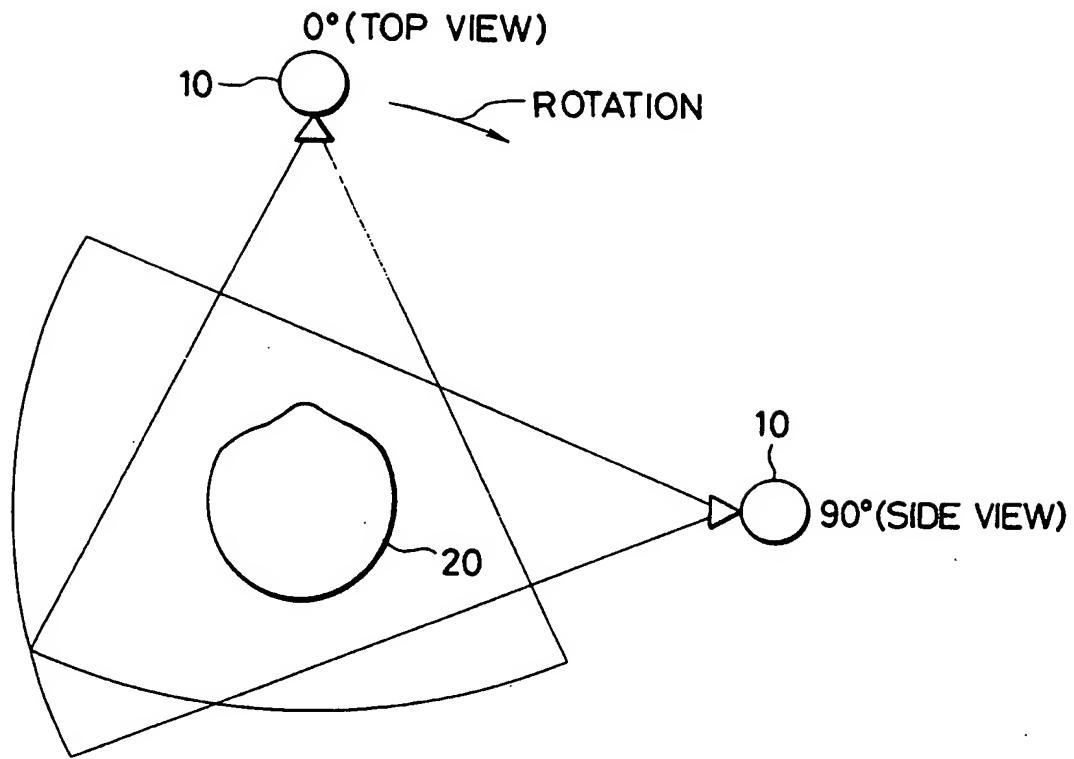


FIG. 10

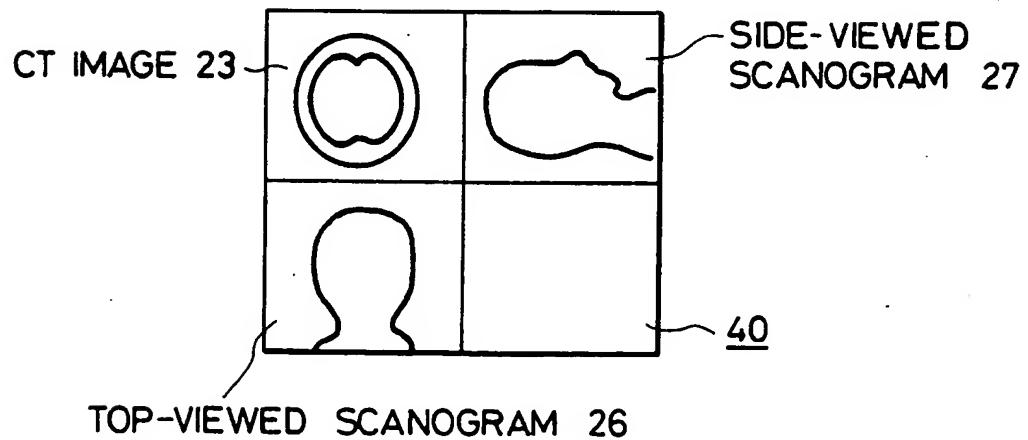


FIG. 9

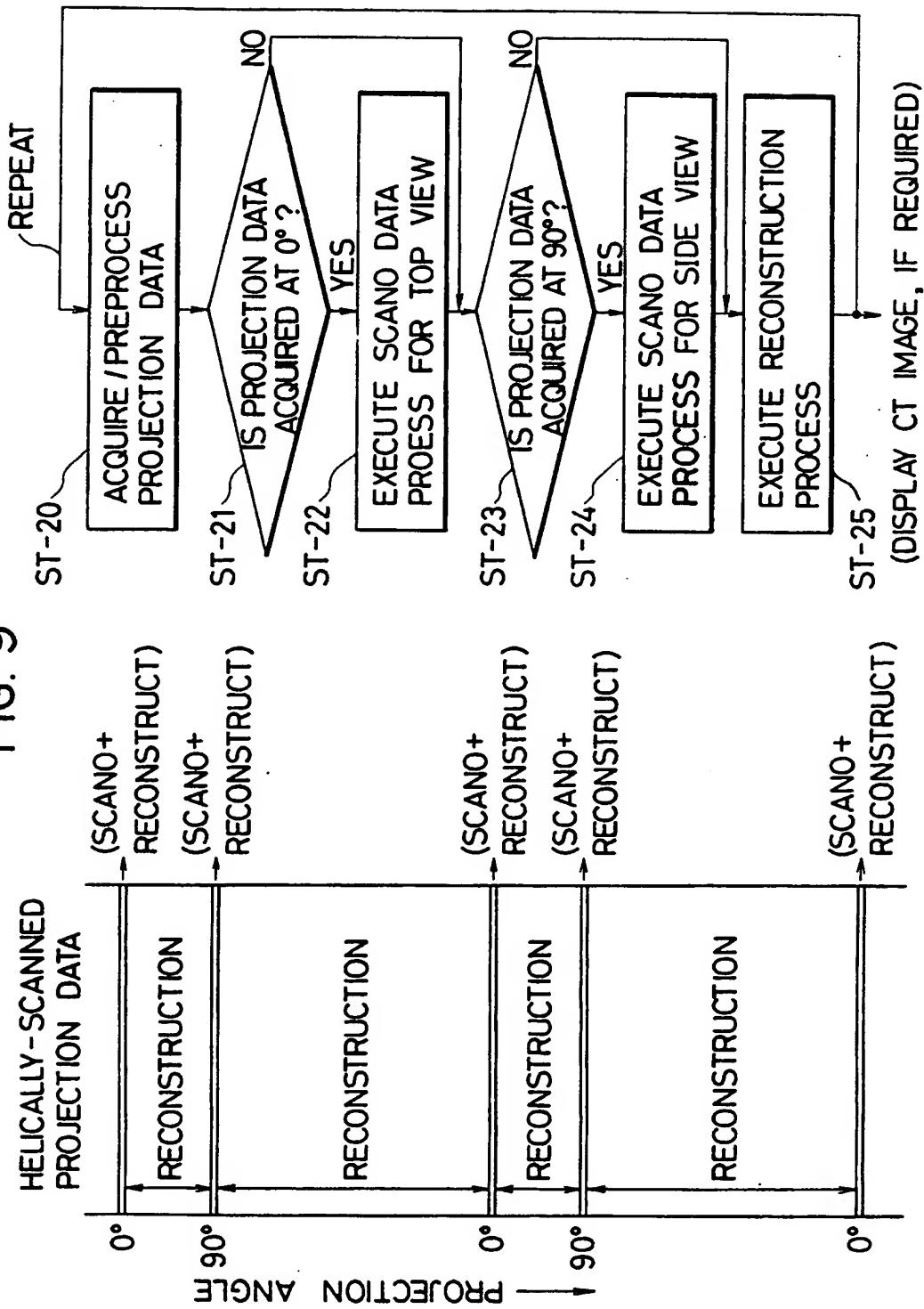


FIG. 11

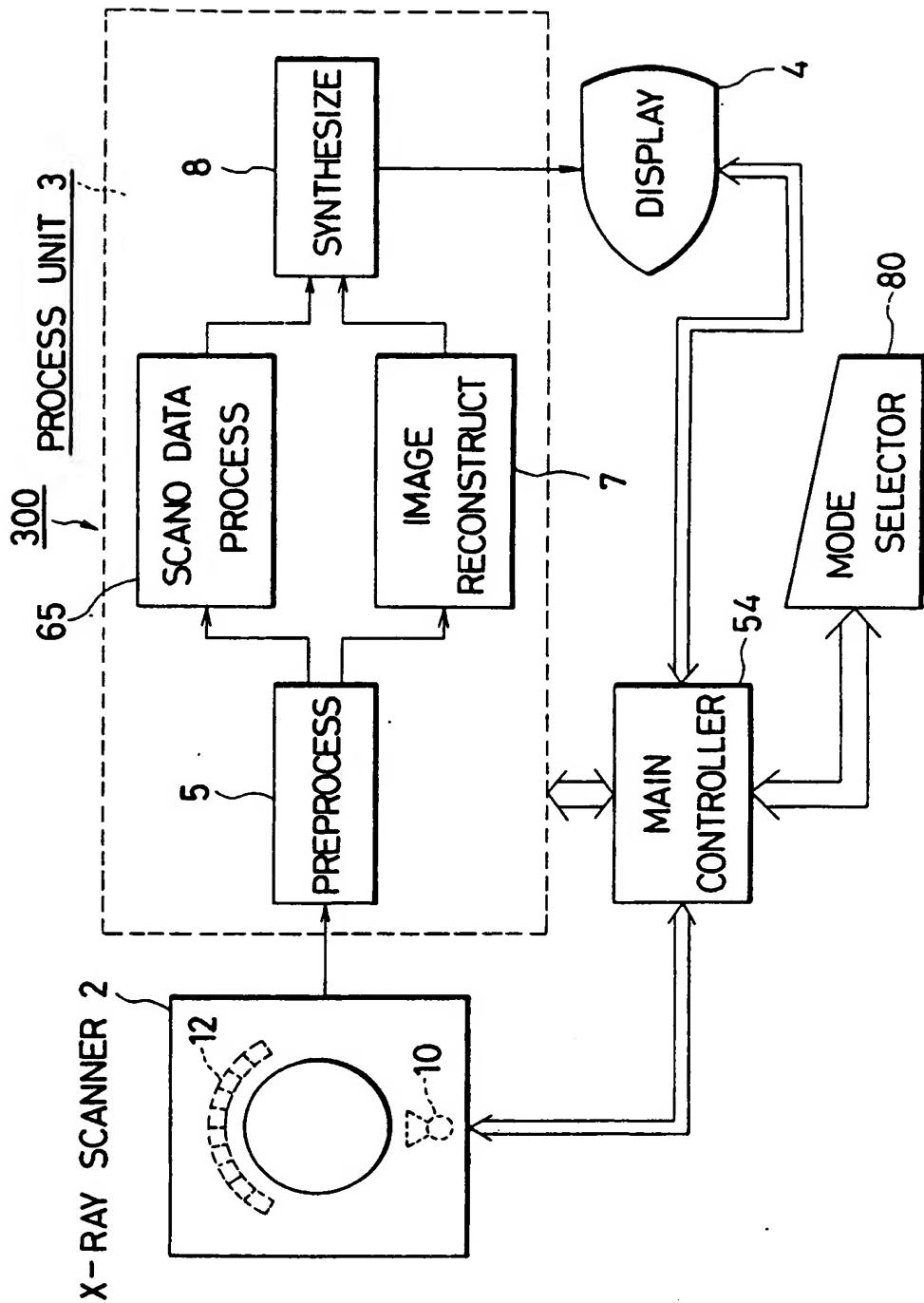


FIG. 12A - X-RAY PROJECTION CONTROL SIGNAL

FIG. 12B . MODE SELECTING SIGNAL

FIG. 12C • MODE SAMPLING

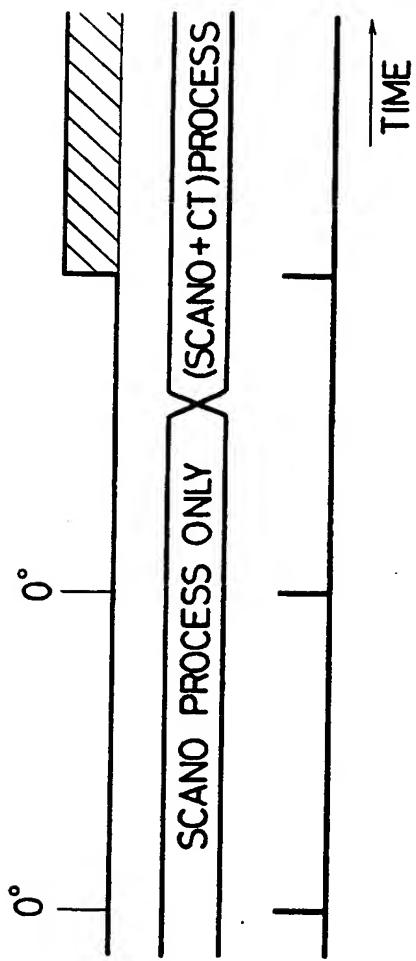


FIG. 14

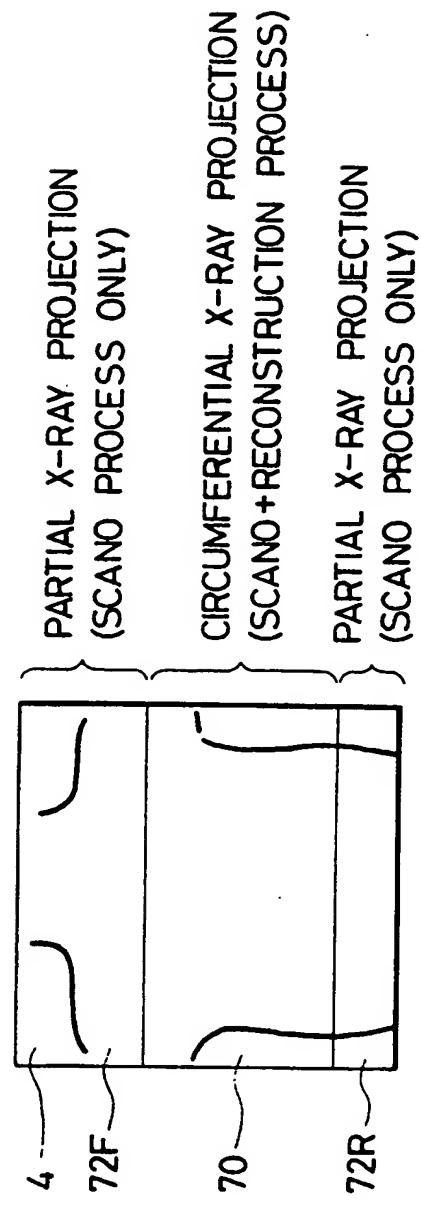


FIG. 13

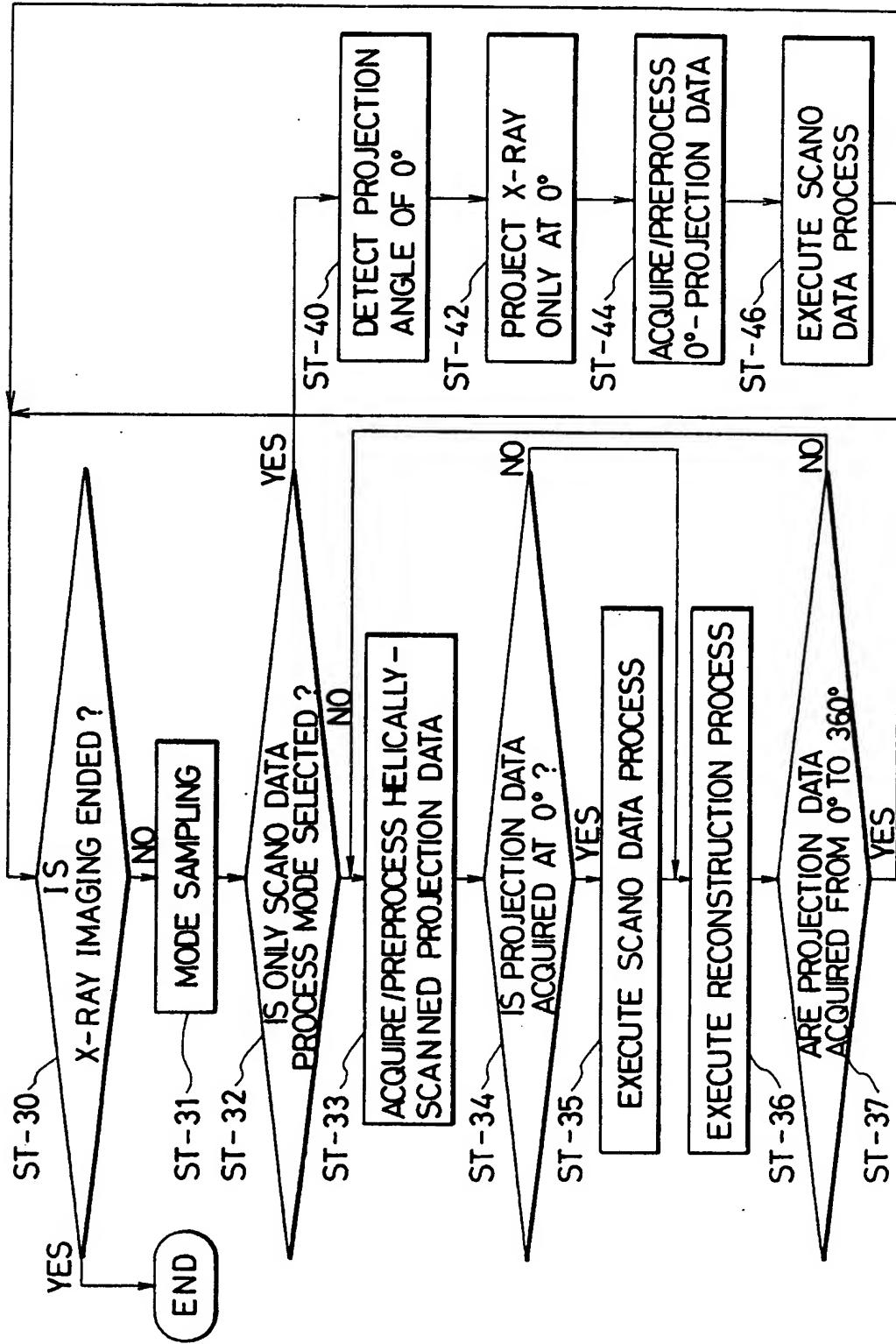


FIG. 15

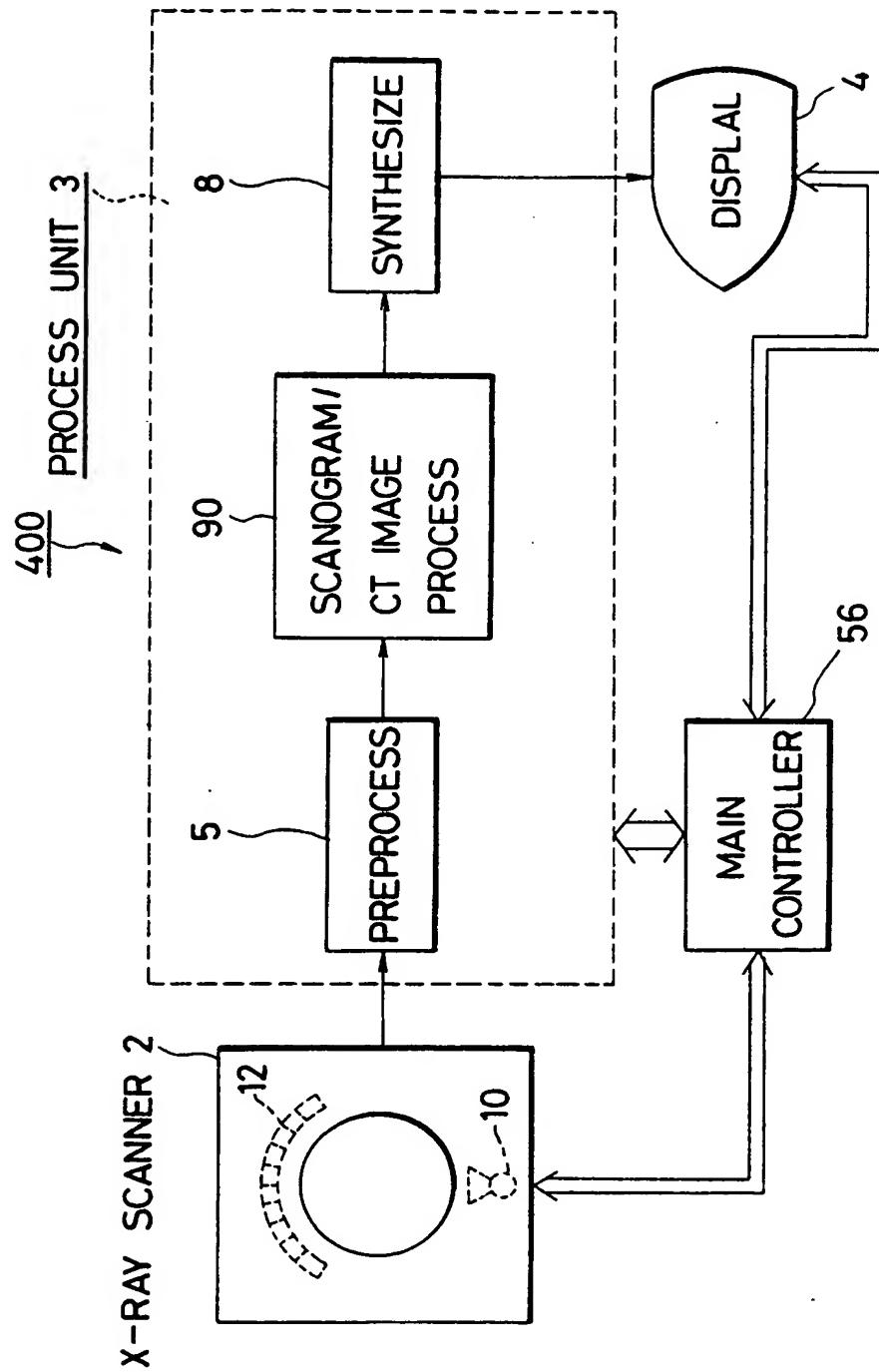


FIG. 16A

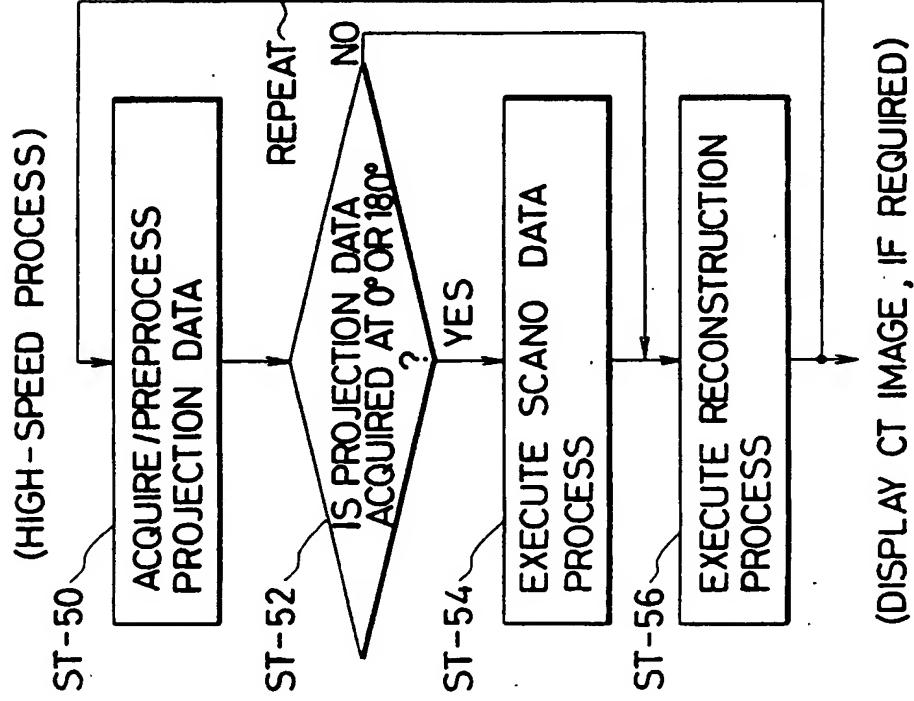
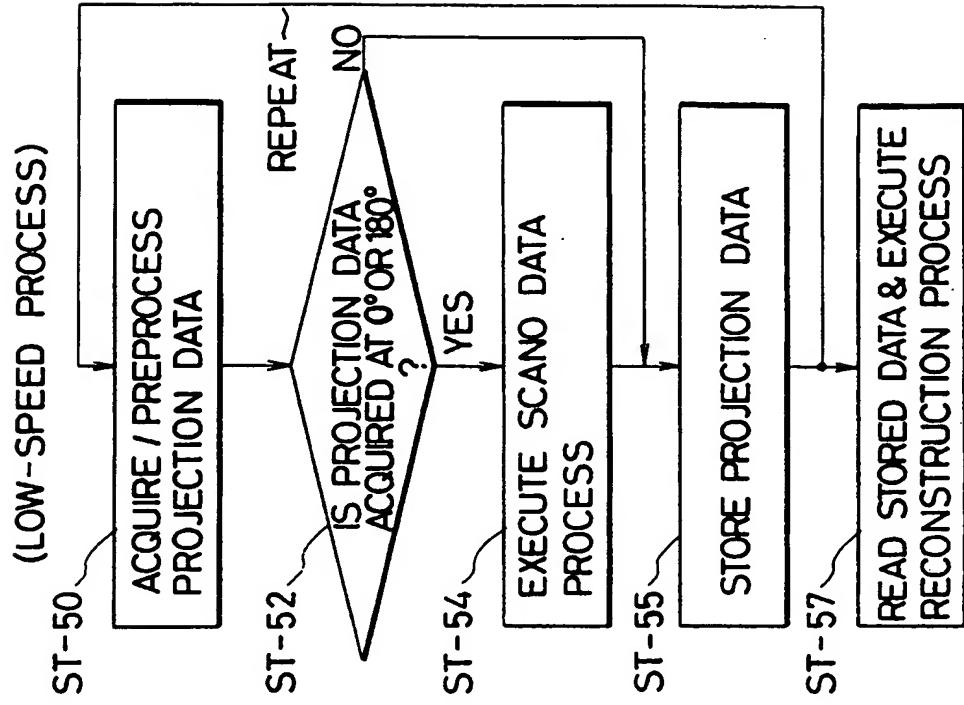


FIG. 16B



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